



August 14, 2020

Kenneth Kovalchick, AICP  
Town Planner  
Guilderland Town Hall | 2Nd Floor  
PO Box 339  
Guilderland, New York 12084

**RE: Rapp Road Residential / Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Projects | Final Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Mr. Kovalchick:

This letter is in reference to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Rapp Road Residential / Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Projects as well as the alternatives being considered for traffic mitigation, especially as it pertains to the Rapp Road Historic District. The City of Albany finds that none of the alternative options currently being considered are acceptable and will increasingly place the burden of traffic impacts squarely on the Albany residents within this area.

As you may recall, City of Albany representatives met with the Town of Guilderland representatives and representatives Pyramid in March of 2019 to discuss the impacts on the proposed 222 unit apartment complex. At the time, the City noted that it was likely, given the available land owned by Pyramid, that there would be additional growth within that area. (Soon after that meeting, the COSTCO development came to light). The City recommended an approach that would allow for future growth, while solving the issues related to Rapp Road where it passes through the The Rapp Road Community Historic District.

It is clear to us, that our proposal, which was noted as Alternative 1 | Eastern Bypass, was not given adequate or serious consideration. In fact, the response to our comments on the DEIS were inadequate and inaccurate. We continue to stand by the statement made: *"This is the City of Albany's preferred alternative and the only which eliminates through traffic in the already constrained area of Rapp Road, minimizes any increase in emergency response time, and does not impact the quality of life or convenience of the Albany residents in the Rapp Road Community Historic District, Pine Lane, or Willan Lane."*

In addition, the response noted that the "assertion that Alternative 1 will accomplish the statements appear to be in accurate, and /or unproven..." The City of Albany considered emergency response time, with input from AFD and APD, and concluded that emergency response time for the Rapp Road Historic District would remain the same, while emergency response time for Pine Lane and Wilan Lane would actually be improved, since currently Springsteen is a one-way going northbound, which forces emergency vehicles to enter from Washington Avenue Extension at Rapp Road and Frontage Road. The Eastern Bypass option would shorten the distance to Pine Lane and Wilan Lane.

In our statement, the City of Albany noted that Alternative 1 would not impact the quality of life or convenience or the Albany residents in the Rapp Road Community Historic District, Pine Lane, or Wilan Lane..." Clearly, an increase in traffic on a road that is not built to an adequate standard and which bisects a historic district, has a negative impact. Removing that traffic would improve the district. In addition, the Eastern bypass alternative would not negatively impact the quality of life or convenience for Pine Lane or Wilan Lane residents, as they would still be able to get to Washington Avenue Extension at a controlled signal, would still be able to get to their homes from Washington Avenue Extension without having to drive west on Frontage Road and then through the historic district and would continue to have access to Western Avenue via Rapp Road traveling south.

It is also noted in the response, that the commenter "omitted any reference to the potential impacts to the Pine Bush Management Plan..." In our comments, we clearly stated the following: "The City understand that this alternative would impact an area noted in the Pine Bush 2017 Management Plan Update as recommended for full protection."

The City noted the following that would be accomplished by the Alternative One | Eastern BiPass, all of which are true and indisputable:

- Protects the Rapp Road Historic District from through traffic, preserving both the cultural and historic significance of this area; TRUE
- Provides for a road that could be constructed to required standards and handle future expansion and development on the Pyramid lands; TRUE
- Allows convenient access to Washington Avenue Extension and Western Avenue for the residents of the Rapp Road Historic District, Pine Lane, and Wilan Lane; TRUE
- Does not negatively impact emergency or other essential services to the City's residents in this area; TRUE
- Provides for a connection between Washington Avenue Extension and Western Avenue; TRUE
- Brings traffic out at a controlled signal at Washington Avenue Extension, rather than the frontage road; and
- Can be constructed entirely on lands owned by the Pyramid Corporation. TRUE

The traffic alternatives which are currently being considered do not mitigate the impact to our residents, and therefore we cannot support any of them at this time. Assuming the Town of Guilderland moves forward with these developments and does not further study the eastern bypass or another option which mitigates the impact, the City of Albany will consider all options available to us that protect our residents along Wilan Lane, Pine Lane, and in the Rapp Road Historic District.

Sincerely,



Christopher P. Spencer

Commissioner of Planning and Development | City of Albany